

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

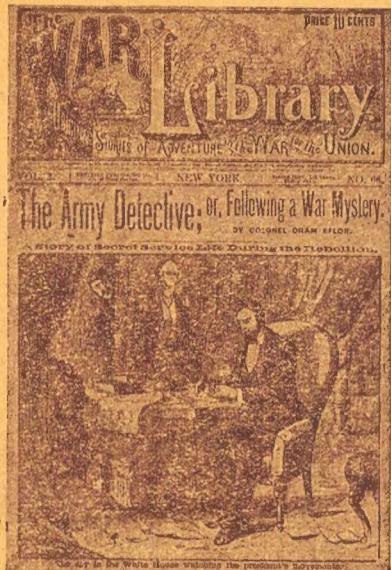
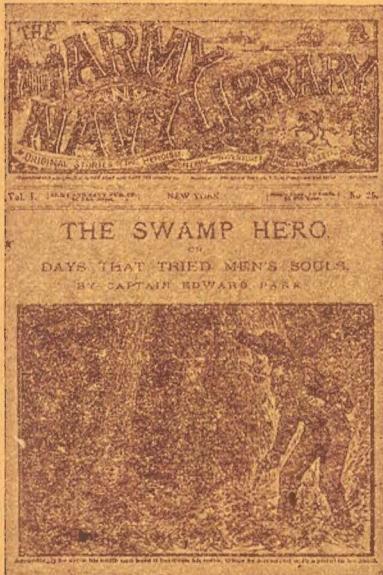


SPECIAL BIRTHDAY NUMBER

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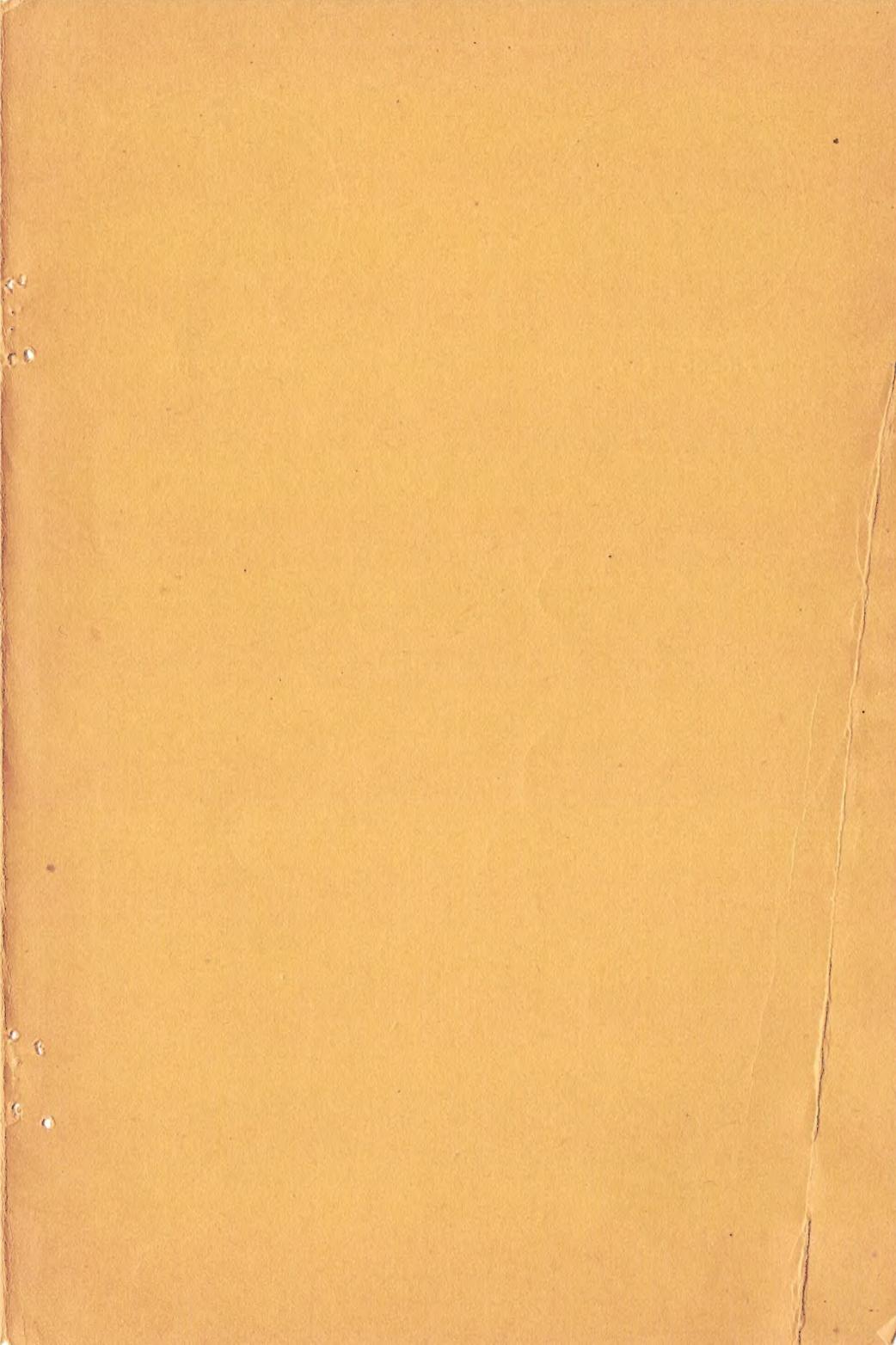
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## "OLD KING BRADY"

By G. H. Cordier

"He was a tall, distinguished looking old gentleman of striking appearance and peculiar dress. He wore a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and turned-up collar, and a big white hat with an extraordinary broad brim.

How many lovers of the good old hair-trigger style of literature will recognize the above description? They can be counted by the thousands, and they will all take their hats off to the greatest detective, bar none, who ever lived in the fascinating pages of Dime Novel fiction. The noblest Roman of them all—"Old King Brady."

Beside him the Nick Carters, Old Sleuth, Young Sleuth and Old Cap Collier pale their ineffectual fires. None of these or any of the numerous other sleuths who flourished in the libraries and story-papers of the days that are past can take rank with the old detective; he stands alone, in a class by himself, and there are none that can measure up to his standard.

At first alone in the pages of that gorgeous, absorbingly fascinating boys paper of the good old days, "The Boys of New York," then with his two assistants, the dashing Harry and the lovely Alice in his own particular weekly, "Secret Service," Old King Brady passed through more strange adventures, had more narrow escapes and brought more criminals to justice than any other of the detectives whose adventures were chronicled in the libraries and story-papers of Dime Novel times.

Old King Brady was the creation of Francis W. Doughty, an author who, in the writer's humble opinion, just missed being a great writer. In fact, he was a great writer in his own way, but what the writer wishes to convey

is, that he fell little short of being in the same class as Adolphe Belot, Emile Garboriau and Conan Doyle as writers of detective fiction, and with Alexandre Dumas, Capt. Mayne Reid and James Fennimore Cooper in the telling of fascinating stories. The above statement may be questioned, and the writer asked for his reasons for this belief in the superiority of the character of Old King Brady above the other fiction sleuths who lived in the golden age of Dime Novel literature. He would reply that the character is no merely imaginary one; that he has met just such wholesouled, kind-hearted, courageous types of Irish gentlemen, and what Doughty did was to take the type, which he must have known well, and present it with all its fine traits and some of its weaknesses in the role of a detective. Beside this Doughty was a most careful writer. The following is quoted from an article in the New York Tribune:

"But the local color supplied for these tales was far from faked. His library was papered with large maps, which he consulted when writing about certain parts of the country with which he was not familiar, and hundreds of reference books were always at his elbow. Because of this conscientious effort to make his stories accurate readers of his highly imaginative thrillers came into possession of bits of geographical and historical knowledge that might not have been readily administered in any other form. It was due to this fact, his publishers say, that his Old King Brady series was popular more than thirty years. In other words, he served solid food with his dessert."

The paper goes on to state that he wrote more than thirteen hundred complete detective stories, and many works on scientific subjects.

The writer's first introduction to Old

King Brady was in the year 1885. It was then the custom of that glorious old paper, "The Boys of New York," to send out specimen copies when printing new stories and one of them came into the writer's possession. In it appeared the opening chapter of "At Midnight on the 11th, or Old King Brady and the Mystery of Pen A," also the first chapters of "The Electric Cyclones, or Wonderful Adventures in No Man's Land," being a Frank Reade story.

About two years ago the writer made a trade for some numbers of "The Boys of New York," and to his intense surprise and delight there were those two stories reprinted in 1891 in the numbers he had just acquired. It was indeed a joyous occasion for the writer as he had wanted these two tales all that long period of time.

The Old King Brady stories not only afforded pleasure and entertainment to the youth of America, but they were famous in other lands, being translated and printed in many foreign languages.

Besides his novels, Doughty was noted as a numismatist. From boyhood up he was a collector of rare coins and was always interested in numismatics. He at one time had the largest collection of copper coins in America. He was also the author of a leading text-book on the United States coinage of copper money. This hobby of his he made use of in many of his stories. Two of them in particular the writer recalls, the one entitled, "The Cellar of Death," and the other "The House of Skulls," both in Secret Service and there were others that the writer read in the New York Detective Library. In the first story a young man is lured into the power of brutal criminals through his interest in old coins, and in the other a hideous monstrosity is tracked to his lair through his desire to add to the number of his collection.

Of the two classes of Doughty's stories, those that first appeared in The Boys of New York, and those which appeared in Secret Service, the writer, though he dearly loves them both, prefers the latter for the reason that in the shorter tales in Secret Service Doughty made use of his peculiar style of basing his story on real facts and, as, stated in the N. Y. Tribune article, giving an accurate de-

scription of the people and country in which the action of the story is supposed to take place.

All of Doughty's stories are readable and many of them highly interesting for that reason. The little bits of local color are very interesting and entertaining and add much to the thrill of the narrative, when the reader is taken in the story to some little known portion of our own or some foreign country. It was Edgar Allan Poe who, in one of his essays pronounced himself in favor of "the short prose tale," and the writer heartily agrees with him. Hence his preference for the short stories in Secret Service.

To give an illustration, taken from a story entitled "The Bandit's Gold," the scene of which is laid in the Southwest:

"Poor country, this," remarked Harry.

"Well, I should say so," growled Jack Peters. "A man might better be dead than stuck down here."

"Now that is where you are both wrong," said Old King Brady. "I have been all over this section years ago, although I don't claim any knowledge of this particular swamp. The land is astonishingly rich and with this mild climate, these low-lying tracts properly drained, could easily be reclaimed and southwestern Arkansas converted into a garden-spot of the world."

Another little bit lifted from "The Bradys Among the Mormons." Young King Brady determined to get back down-town, but just as he had come to that conclusion he perceived ahead of him, on the side of the roadway from the lake shore a low stone house built in the old Mormon style and surrounded by a high adobe wall on top of which broken bottles and all sorts of pieces of glass were cemented. In olden times before the days of the Union Pacific Railroad in Utah the Mormon houses were all built upon one plan which is so peculiar that it should be described.

A Mormon on his first marriage was required by law to build himself a house and as soon as possible to abandon the home of his parents and take possession thereof with his wife. This house was seldom more than one story high, although there might be as many rooms as there were desired upon the ground floor. The front was plainness itself and the door was always at the side. A hallway opening from it communicated with the different rooms.

All windows were at the front and sides, the rear presenting simply a solid wall. When the Mormon married a second wife he built another section to his house immediately behind the first which was reached by another door and hallway. If he married a third time another section was built and another door and hallway added, and so on for as many wives as he might chose to marry.

Another description from "The Black Hounds," also in *Secret Service*: "The signal being given the launch started, shooting up Coyote Canyon, which must now be described. "The formation of these canyons in and around Colorado mark the effects of mighty convulsions of nature in ages long passed. Many claimed that all were washed out by water, but it would seem as though a single glance at these mighty rifts in the Rocky Mountains would be enough to satisfy the ordinary mind that such cannot have been the fact, and that the formation of these canyons was due to a shrinking of the earth's surface owing to volcanic action.

The foregoing little bits of description illustrate Doughty's peculiar talent of utilizing the local color in his stories which invested his tales with a special charm all their own.

Doughty evidently cherished a violent antipathy to members of the medical profession, he having made use of so many of them as villains in so large a number of his stories. The following are a few of the titles in which the criminal is a disciple of Esculapius. *The Seven Masks*, or *Strange Doings at the Doctors' Club*, *The Doctors' Death League*, *The Five Jars*, *Dr. Dockery*, *The Death Club*, *The Race With Death*, or *Dealing with Duval*, the *Demon Doctor*, and a host of others.

In this regard Doughty made no mistake. To quote Sherlock Holmes in "The Speckled Band": "Subtle enough and horrible enough. When a doctor does wrong he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge. Palmer and Pritchard were among the heads of their profession. Referring to the above quoted author, Doughty's style is strikingly reminiscent of Conan Doyle's. There is the same clarity of narrative; the same vivid descriptive power, the same charm and fascination that holds the reader spellbound and which forbids him to lay the book down until the

story is finished.

To the writer's way of thinking, some of Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes" stories are aside from the character of Holmes himself, and the colorful and elegant style pretty poor stuff. Doyle scarcely ever takes Holmes out of England, while Doughty has Old King Brady travel the world around.

There are a number of the Holmes narratives which create an absolute feeling of disgust in the writer; and excite an emotion of intense surprise that Doyle should exhibit such poverty of invention when writing these particular tales. It was when he undertook to write a story in which the characters are supposed to be Americans that Doyle exhibits that peculiar lack of either creative power or knowledge which makes those particular stories so much inferior to his other productions.

Be it clearly understood that this is written in no attempt to disparage Doyle's writing ability, the writer being one of his ardent admirers ever since he first read "A Study in Scarlet," over forty years ago. But the writer feels there are a small number of his stories which are not up to his high standard; hence unworthy of his exalted genius.

The writer asks permission to give one or two little bits of description to illustrate his point that Doughty had an animus against doctors. The following is taken from *The Doctors' Death League*:

"It was one chance in a thousand, and Young King Brady started to make the most of it without any loss of time. He crept to the curtains and listened. Dr. Passmore, Dr. Mullin and Dr. Ferguson were the occupants of the room. They sat at a long table, Dr. Passmore being at the head, reading. Harry thought, as he gazed at these men, he had never seen such hard cruel looking faces in spite of the intelligence which each one bore."

Another selection to exhibit Doughty's wealth of out-of-the-way knowledge and his bias against doctors:

"Young King Brady had made a discovery which definitely settled the question as to where the headless corpses found in the East River had come from. One glance showed him how the bodies had been thrown into the river. Hurrying to the window, when the blinds were closed he threw up one and turned the slats. This showed him more plainly the strange

machine which stood facing the other window. It was the reproduction of an ancient Balastre. Who knows what a balastre is? Not one in a thousand, and yet at one stage in the world's history it was the most formidable engine of war known. Imagine a moveable platform controlled by a powerful screw and a huge bow. By winding up the bow you got a force of immense capacity. By suddenly loosening the bow, done by springing a simple ratchet, said force was exerted, the platform thrown forward and at the same time tilted up at a given angle. As will be readily seen without further description whatever then rests upon that platform is bound to shoot through the air with great speed. The platform was of sufficient length to accommodate a human body. There beside it lay a headless body ready to be launched into space on the first dark night."

The above is from the story of "The Seven Masks," which appeared in Secret Service.

Another illustration taken from "Dr. Dockery," likewise in Secret Service: "This way," said the doctor, throwing open the door of an elegantly furnished private office. He fixed his eyes upon the detective as he stood aside to permit him to pass in ahead. Such a keen, cold, steely glitter Old King Brady thought he had never before seen in human eyes.

"That man would sell his own brother for money," he said to himself.

Dr. Dockery followed him into the office and closed the door.

The writer, in reading Doughty's stories, is amazed at their continued high quality and sustained interest. Of the 285 numbers in the writer's collection he has listed 109 as highly interesting; his favorites which he has read many times over. Then there are 120 which he has marked as "interesting," then 50 that are "readable," and 6 which were written by other authors than Doughty.

All the interesting tales are distinguished by a wealth of what may be termed picturesque knowledge along with forceful power of description and grace and charm of style. What adds to the writers wonderment is that his little collection of Secret Service, some stories in the New York Detective Library and portions of stories in *The Boys of New York* are only a very small portion of all Doughty writes. When one considers that the same ra-

tio holds good in all that Doughty wrote one marvels that any one person should have been capable of such long continued effort and uniform high degree of excellence. It is the writer's opinion that such prodigious productivity is nothing less than astounding and indicates the possession of a high degree of genius on the part of Doughty; also, he ventures to predict that some day such genius will be recognized and his works sought after and published in high-priced editions.

The writer never had the good fortune to own or the pleasure to read the first number of Secret Service, and so does not know the circumstances under which Harry Brady, afterward Young King Brady, same name but no relation of Old King Brady, came to be Old King Brady's companion. It has been his hope that some day he might be able to obtain a copy of the first number but such a chance is now very remote owing to the great scarcity of the first numbers of Secret Service and so, in all probability, the writer will never have the enjoyment of perusing the first number and following the adventures of Old King Brady and his boy companion and pupil in their first case in Secret Service.

With Alice, however, the case is different. The writer has in his collection the four stories that relate the circumstances under which she came to be a member of the Brady Detective Agency. The titles of the stories are "De Hop Low," "Beaumont Oil King," "The Prince of Persia," and "Captain Darke."

In the first story Alice is discovered unconscious in a closet in a cellar in New York Chinatown, with paper and rubbish piled against the door, all ablaze as though some one was trying to burn her to death. To quote from the story:

"What Old King Brady saw was a young girl lying upon a mattress inside the little room. She was a perfect beauty of the blonde type. Above the average height, her features were exquisitely moulded. Pale as death, she lay there, looking more like a wax figure than a living woman."

Alice is cared for tenderly by the Bradys and turns out to be a highly intelligent woman, normal in all respects, except that she had lost her memory and was unable to give any account of herself. It is learned, how-

ever, that she has enemies who seek to do her harm.

In the second story it is related how at last Old King Brady, under the feminine influence of Alice is induced to leave the dingy office over the saloon on Park Row and move up-town to better quarters.

In the third story Alice comes up against a skilled crook who had known her in the past, and who threatened her life.

In the fourth and last of this series of stories the mystery is solved and Alice is discovered to be the daughter of a missionary long residing in China; an expert linguist who had instructed her in her intensive knowledge of various languages, and especially that difficult language, the Chinese. Her father having died, Alice was without resources, and being in Sydney, Australia, at the time she accepted a position with the Secret Service Bureau of that country. She became highly valued for her knowledge of Chinese and in time proved herself to be an expert detective. While following up a case which involved highly-titled English people she is forced to drink a dose of Chinese medicine which caused he to lose her memory and all knowledge of her former life, except that she recalled her name was Alice.

In the story of the series relating to her, old King Brady takes her to a famous Chinese doctor in Honolulu and she received from him an antidote to the drug which she had taken, restoring her memory completely.

In due course of time, Young King Brady becomes deeply interested in his fair partner, so that the burning question arises; did Harry ever marry Alice?

The writer has often wished that Doughty, before he passed to his reward, had written a story in which Harry and Alice were made to join hands and then march down the aisle together to the strains of "Here Comes the Bride," and then live happily ever after, but, as far as the writer knows, no such story was ever written, and so it will never be known just what was the ending of the romance between Harry and the charming Alice.

If anyone were to ask the writer what he considered the most interesting of Doughty's tales he would answer that his preference is for the out-door tales, especially where the scene is laid in some portion of the

West. While many of the New York stories are highly interesting, still Doughty wrote with great power in his Western romances and, as stated previously, made more use of local color which lends a peculiar picturesque charm to these particular stories.

In a story previously mentioned, "At Midnight On the 11th," Doughty created a character which he never, as far as the writer knows, made use of thereafter. That character was that of the old detective's son, Dr. Horace Brady. The writer has often wondered why Doughty never again made use of such a character, offering such infinite possibilities, in any other of his stories.

It seems to the writer to have been a desecration of the memory of Doughty that other writers should have been allowed to write under his nom-de-plume of A New York Detective, and their stories to have been published in Secret Service. Their productions are so far inferior to Doughty's tales, both in style and invention, that they can be detected at a glance by a lover of Doughty's romances. They degrade the fine character of Old King Brady to the level of a Police Court Detective, having him chew tobacco, use slang and in general act as one of a low order of intelligence. This is all exasperating to one who has an intense admiration for the character, and the writer cannot understand what was gained by permitting writers of an inferior grade to intrude on Doughty's particular province. Harry is treated in the same way, and the dashing hero of Doughty's stories is made to act like a common street boy.

The writer is a poor man, though he may not always be so. As it is, he has often thought of the pleasure and satisfaction it would give him, if he had wealth, to erect a lasting memorial to the fame and the name of FRANCIS WORCESTER DOUGHTY, as a testimonial of respect and gratitude for many happy hours passed in company with an unique character. As matters are, did he live in the East, he would visit his last resting place and place a laurel wreath — the ancient reward for valor and merit — on the grave of the creator of

OLD KING BRADY

RETROSPECTION  
OR  
LEAVES FROM THE PAST

By  
"Deadwood Dick, Jr."

Time. Late November, 1900. Scene. A large kitchen in an old fashioned down East New England farm house. The kitchen is redolent with the smell of pumpkin and mince pies. It is the day before Thanksgiving. A cheerful faced little woman is working over a hot stove preparing goodies for the holiday. Between two windows is a large old fashioned couch. The late afternoon sun is streaming in from the two windows, making a sort of halo over the head and shoulders of a little lad of about eight years, who is reclining on his stomach, on the couch, reading a dime novel. It is the *Wide-A-Wake Library* edition of "Frank Reade and His Air-Ship in Asia." A man enters the kitchen with an armful of wood and deposits it in the large wood-box behind the stove. The little woman nods her head toward the little lad on the couch and says, "A chip off the old block. Are you proud or ashamed of him? Remember your love of dime novels? Like father, like son." The man, makes no answer in words. A loving, tolerant smile wreathes his lips, and he crosses the big kitchen and seats himself in an easy chair at the head of the couch. The little brown haired, brown eyed lad looks up, saying, "Oh, dad what are these long words and what do they mean?" The man sits there for at least a couple of hours, pronouncing the large words, and explaining their meaning to the little lad. Evidently a fine spirit of comradeship exists between them. (A scene that will never fade from my memory.).... Two years later. A rainy day in summer. The little lad is very disconsolate and sad. His pal and comrade, his beloved dad, has recently died, and the little lad is lost indeed without him. He wanders to the attic in search of anything that would serve to attract his attention for an hour or two on this dismal rainy day. He overhauls stacks of discarded furniture, old newspapers in stacks, old clothes, discarded hoop skirts, cowhide boots, etc. Suddenly his eye lights upon a small cowhide covered trunk shoved away back under the eaves. He draws it out, lifts the lid, and his eyes shine with ecstasy. What does he see?

Stacks of bonds and bags of gold coin? No, he sees a trunk full to the lid of old time dime novels. A cache of dads evidently put away years before, and forgotten. N. Y. Detective Library, Little Chief Library, Nickel Library, Wide-A-Wake Library, Old Cap Collier's, Comic Library, Log Cabin Library, Beadle's Boys Library, Beadles Dime and Half Dime Libraries and many others. At dusk mother has searched the whole house over for the lad. Finally she finds him in his attic retreat with novels piled all over the floor around him. He is reading "Old King Brady and the James Boys" and very ignorant of the fact that darkness is approaching and mother has been searching all over for him... Three years later. A big event in the life of the youngster is about to take place. An event still fresh in his memory after a period of nearly 33 years. Mother's pension has at last been granted (Dad was a Civil War veteran) with nearly five years back pay. Red tape and delays of various kinds have nearly killed her hopes of ever receiving it. But at last she receives it with back pay to the date of her first application for it. A sizeable check of several hundreds of dollars. Mother must make a journey to the nearest bank which is over thirty miles away. She has promised big sister and little lad that they should go with her. The youngster is so excited over it all that he slept little that night, and, before dawn, is up and dressed for the trip. The sun is not up before they strike out behind "Old Dobbin" for an 18-mile drive to a town connected with the city by a Trolley line. This is the little lad's first sight of a Trolley car. He was a bit scared when the car started, but soon became accustomed to it and greatly enjoyed the several miles ride to the city. The city finally reached, the check cashed, and the larger part of it placed on deposit, mother and sister decide to do some shopping. The little lad is given a bright new shiny quarter to spend as he sees fit. It is a big sum of money to him, the most he ever had at one time in his life. But he is so greatly impressed by all he sees that he goes around with the quarter tightly clutched in his hand, nearly forgotten. The high buildings awe him, the big department stores with an elevator running from floor to floor are a revelation. He has read about it all in his novels, but for the

first time in his life is seeing much that he has read about.

Gosh all hemlocks! What is this he sees? A bookstore such as he has read about, with a window display of bright new colored cover novels. The lad enters. Mother and sister not noticing his entry pass on. The lad, once inside, heads for the counter where the novels are sold. He hardly knows what to buy. Here is his old friend, Frank Reade, Jr., all dressed up in colored covers. The other colored covers are ones that he never even heard of. They all look equally attractive. Finally his mind is made up, and he buys two Frank Reades and a *Pluck and Luck*, whose cover especially attracts him. It shows a bunch of soldiers and frontiersmen totally surrounded and being cut down by hundreds of Indians. It is titled "*Custer's Last Shot; or, The Boy Trailer of the Little Horn*." The clerk calls the lad's attention to a stack of secondhand novels that sell two for five cents. Looking them over he finds more of his old favorites with bright colored jackets. Here he finds, "*Jack Wright*" in *Pluck and Luck*, and *Buffalo Bill* in early *Buffalo Bill Stories*. In no time at all his remaining dime that he had meant to buy candy with, has gone for four more novels. He reaches the street to remember for the first time for at least ten minutes, that mother and sister did not enter with him. They are not in sight. The lad realizes at once that he is lost. He is a bit alarmed but not greatly scared. Starting in the direction he was formerly heading he meets a policeman, whom he stops and tells his troubles to. The friendly cop says, "Don't worry, son. We will go to the police station and sooner or later they will turn up there in search of you." They had hardly started when about half a block ahead of them the lad sees mother and sister charging back, with another puffing cop in tow. Mutual explanations follow. While cop number two scowls at the lad, cop number one smiles and pats the youngster on the head saying, "Good-bye, Laddie, hope I see you again some time. Don't let Frank Reade fly away with you." (Neither realized at that time that in after years the youngster would make the city his home, and that they would again meet and become fast friends for years. But it really did happen so.) It is so late that mother and sister decide to stay over the night in the city

and go to the theatre. The play was "*East Lynne*." A very tired but very happy little boy retired that night to dream of "*East Lynne*," "*Frank Reade*," and "*Jack Wright*," and big policemen, all in a hectic jumble.... Another rainy day in summer. A brown haired, brown eyed lad of 14 is reclining up in the hay loft of a big barn. Evidently this is a favorite retreat of his. Let's see if we can describe the situation. A deep hollow or hole is dug down into the hay about eight feet square, back against the side of the barn. A large crack in the boarding gives plenty of light to the hole or hollow. A box on one side of the lad contains about a half peck of early "pumpkin sweet" apples. Another box contains novels of all descriptions. The lad is reading a thick type novel, one of *The Harkaway Library*. It is titled "*Jack Harkaway at Oxford*." The patter of the rain on the roof makes the lad drowsy. His eyes start to close, the half-munched apple drops from his hand, the other hand holding the novel slowly drops, and his eyes close. The patter of the rain on the barn roof has lulled the lad to sleep. The sleep of innocent boyhood.... A few months later. Night. A tent containing four cot beds and as many boys. Two lanterns hang from the ridge pole of the tent giving plenty of light: The floor of the tent is literally carpeted with novels of the five cent colored variety. *Pluck and Luck*, *Brave and Bold*, *Buffalo Bill*, *Diamond Dick*, *Secret Service*, etc. Horrors! What do we see? Our brown haired, brown eyed lad reclining on one of the cots smoking a cigarette while a packet of "*Sweet Caporals*" lie on a table in the middle of the tent. The other three lads are likewise employed. Reading novels and smoking cigarettes. What will eventually become of these boys? Become train robbers, or bank burglars I expect. (One is now dead, one is a big contractor in New York. One is a locomotive engineer, while the fourth is at present a W. P. A. foreman.) The four boys while smoking are chattering about their favorite dime novel heroes. The brown haired lad finally picks up from the floor a *Pluck and Luck* and starts to read. Its title is "*The Red Leather Bag*." Finally the other boys settle down and follow his example.... Misfortunes. The farm is lost.... Constant moves, always toward the coast.... A seaport city is finally reached.

A few months of comparative happiness, then mother dies. The boy's first sweetheart dies. Then—Chaos.....A young sailor, a hard working, hard drinking, swash-buckling young rake reaches his home port after an absence of three years. While still in his teens the lad has seen much of the world in the past three years: Havana, Tampico, Hong Kong, London, Havre, and many other ports of call. During these three years dime novels have been forgotten. The lad was interested mostly in shore parties which consisted mostly of booze and dark-eyed señoritas. Coming ashore at his home port aroused the refined spirit of the lad which while always a part of his nature, had laid dormant so long. Perhaps the familiar scenes aroused memories of mother and the girl. Or perhaps a black haired, black eyed Salvation Army lass, had something to do with his decision to remain ashore and learn a trade..... Years later. A man sits before an open grate fire reading a magazine. Across the room a black haired matron sits sewing. Two young girls are at a table doing their school home work. At the feet of the man, prattles a little two-year old boy, with brown hair and eyes. Suddenly the man's eye is caught by an advertisement listing for sale some books by one of his favorite authors, H. Rider Haggard. He at once orders two of the books. A few days later the books arrive, and with them a few little papers devoted to the collecting of old time dime novels. For the first time the man learns that old novels are being collected, and that there is a body of collectors banded together, calling themselves the Happy Hours Brotherhood. The old "dime novel germ" in the man, dormant these many years, is aroused again, and it comes to his memory that packed away somewhere, he must have a few novels. After a search, he unearths them, and is once more a boy in spirit, joining H. H. B.....A week or so later. Eureka! He discovers in a bookstore 600 old time black and white novels. Now he is well on his way as a novel collector.....1930. The depression hits, and hits hard. The man loses his good job that he has held nearly 18 years. Searches vainly for work. Four anxious faces await him at home, at the conclusion of each day's search. He finally becomes discouraged and speaks again of going to sea. The wife at first greatly opposes

the idea, but "needs must when the devil drives." We next see the man heading down to the sea. Is he down-hearted? No, now that the die is cast, we see the old time sparkle in his eye, a hint of a roll is in his gait, he is going back to his old mistress, the sea. .... Late December, 1932. A little coastwise steamboat is rolling and pitching her way along through a nasty northeast snow storm. It is impossible to stand on deck without hanging onto something. The deck is awash, and the bow watch has just relieved and is slowly picking his way along deck toward the companionway, thinking of his bunk in the warm forecastle and the dandy novel awaiting to be read. Thinking too deeply perhaps, instead of watching his step, as suddenly a large wave sweeps that section of the deck, drenching him thoroughly, and nearly sweeping him overboard. At last he is below, and once more in dry clothes. He sighs with relief as he stretches himself out on his bunk, snaps on the light at the head of his bunk and prepares himself to spend an hour with "California Joe's First Trail." He had hardly stretched himself out when suddenly the mate's voice comes roaring down the companionway, "All hands on deck. Stand by the boats!" The storm is increasing; the little steamer decks awash, is rolling and pitching worse than ever. A worried look is in the Captain's eye. A few passengers are terribly seasick and others are white-faced with fear. The morale of the officers and crew is excellent. Their calm demeanor quietes greatly the fear-stricken passengers. A tense half hour is spent standing by the boats, while the little steamer battles her way around Long Ledge and through the dangerous channel of Yorks Marrows, to finally reach calmer waters. It's all in the day's work. Once more the bow-watchman sighs with relief as he trails "California Joe" over his "First Trail." .... February, 1933. Harbors frozen up all along the coast. No steamboat running. Bills running up. A sick wife. The man is in despair. Money must be raised, but how? Weeks of vain search for work, and the conclusion is arrived at that his beloved collection of over 1200 choice dime novels must go. And go they do, at prices that other collectors could not resist. While several hundreds of dollars were realized on the sale, the man gets no joy over the good that

the money has done. He is bitterly hurt, and grieving deeply over the loss of his novels....A couple of months later. The man is again at work, but he is morose, grouchy, very nervous and irritable. He is seated before his bookcase, putting around with a pitiful little handful of novels, the remnant left over after the sale of his novels. For several moments, unknown to him, his wife has been watching him. Finally she speaks: "You miss your novels terribly don't you? It is the cause of your constant grouch, is it not? Something must be done about it. You must start collecting again." A sarcastic smile wreathes the man's lips. "Agreed. But how? Dime novels cost money and plenty of it. We have barely enough to get along on, as it is. Would to God there was a way that I could get started again." Just a few days later it seemed as if that unconscious appeal to God was answered. A large package of black and white novels was received, sent gratis by a good friend of the man, who seemed to know and understand him, although the two had never met in the flesh. Tears dimmed the man's eyes. Tears of gratitude. He could hardly read the brief message that accompanied the package. It read, "I know what you are missing old timer. Here's a little contribution for those empty shelves of yours, and to help you get started again." The man at once became more cheerful. The gloomy, morose look left his face, and he became more cheerful each day and more like his old self. A few local buys of dime novels, picked up cheaply, further encouraged him. More packets of novels gratis from his old friend soon made it possible for him to start his collection over again....A year later. The man in this short time has gathered together a little collection of novels, not nearly as large, but of far more value than his former one. Many items are in it that very few collectors can boast of having. Experience in collecting has taught him to separate "the gold from the dross," as it were....Sept. 6, 1937. A man sits at his desk writing. A middle-aged man, who somehow has a familiar look. Dark brown hair, fast turning gray around the temples. Faded brown eyes, not so wont to sparkle as of yore. Lines of care trace themselves over his face. He turns from his writing to a big stack of dime novels on his desk. On top of the pile

is "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Air-Ship in Asia." He picks it up and looks at it intently for several moments. Does he see the novel, or does he in memory see once more a big New England Kitchen and a once beloved face smiling at him and pronouncing big words for him? He drops the novel with a sigh and picks up a big scrap-book and idly turns the pages. The book is filled with newspaper and magazine article pertaining to dime novels. On the first page of the book is an article clipped from the Worcester Sunday Telegram. One of the illustrations is a photograph of a very bashful looking young man holding two huge milk cans. Further on another illustration shows the same young man seated reading a copy of "Our Boys." He is surrounded by dime novels. Literally thousands of them stacked in huge piles. The title of this article is "Reckless Ralph Still Pursues 'Em." Idly turning the pages of the scrap book the man comes to a section labeled, "Members and Ex-Members of the Happy Hours Brotherhood." On the first page are four small photographs. They are, Ralph E. Cummings, Robert H. Smeltzer, Frank T. Fries, and Edward J. Smeltzer. A friendly smile comes over the man's face as he turns page after page, and sees the faces of friends staring up at him. Here's a picture of his friend, Charles Bragin, and Charles' little daughter, Isabelle, and here's one of George French showing George sitting on the floor of his attic reading a dime novel with a whole trunk full of them opened before him. (This picture reminds me of a sad-faced little boy I once saw doing the same thing.) And here's one of his friends, Paul Maroske, showing Paul seated at his desk, which is covered with dime novels, and Paul is reading one. Suddenly the smile leaves the man's face and a look of sadness takes its place as he turns to a page containing two pictures. One is a post card picture of a fine looking middle-aged man and it is autographed, "To\_\_\_\_\_, from his friend, John J. Maroney." Under it is a white label bearing the words, "Died Aug. 4, 1931." The other picture is of a slightly older man. The man under it is Wm. L. Beck. The white label under it reads simply, "Deceased." A space is held vacant for a photo in this section devoted to photographs. It is held for the photo of the best friend this man ever had in the novel

game. A friend who often has proved a friend in time of need, as well as a friend indeed. A friend whom the man has never met in the flesh, but hopes some day to have at least his pictured likeness. The scrap-book is laid aside, the writing is forgotten, likewise the novels. The man is thinking deeply. His thoughts travel back down the years, and all that dime novels have meant to him all these years. He is thinking especially of the Happy Hours Brotherhood and all that the Brotherhood means to him. Thinking of the many fine friends he has made in the Brotherhood, and what a bunch of "square shooters" they all are. The man is suddenly aroused from his musing by hearing the clock strike eleven. He grabs the bunch of dime novels under one arm, the alarm clock under the other and starts for bed. So ends the day. (And the tale.)

—“Deadwood Dick, Jr.”

October 29th, 1937.

#### EDITORIAL

##### Members and Subscribers:

I want to thank you all for the wonderful cooperation that has been given me, in helping to bring out a real Birthday Number, a special edition to the Dime Novel Roundup. I sure appreciate all you fellows have done to make this such a fine Birthday Number. January, 1938, the Roundup will be just seven (7) years old, and it is still going stronger than ever. Remember when our first issue appeared. That was in January, 1931, and it was the new official organ of the Happy Hours Brotherhood, taking the place of the old reliable Ralph P. Smith's Happy Hour's Magazine. Remember when Ralph and I started the Happy Hour's Brotherhood back in 1924, and the first appearance of Happy Hour's Magazine, January-February, 1925. Ralph P. Smith was President of Happy Hour's Brotherhood from 1925 to the last of June, 1930. I was vice-president at the time. I became President of Happy Hour's Brotherhood July 1st, 1930. Bob Smeitzer vice-president, Ralph P. Smith and J. Edward Liethead on the Advisory Board. I also took over the Happy Hours Magazine from July to December, 1930, and January, 1931, brought out our new organ, Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup. (Bros.

Smeitzer suggested the new title.) Some day we are all in hopes of having a bigger and better magazine than ever. Thanks again to all for the fine co-operation you fellows are giving, to help make the Dime Novel Roundup one of the best Dime Novel Magazines in existence, and our Brotherhood shall continue to grow. Just think of it, we had 77 members, and 11 Honorary Members for 1937. We are in hopes of seeing 100 members or more for 1938. I will do all that's in my power to make the Dime Novel Roundup, and Happy Hours Brotherhood a real success, and I give you my sincere thanks to all who have so kindly aided me.

Your sincere friend and President,  
—Reckless Ralph Cummings.

#### NOVEL NEWS

We are happy to report that Charles Jonas, the greatest of all dime novel collectors, is now enjoying better health, and we look forward to his resuming activity in the hobby in 1938. Which will be good news to his legion of friends.

Professor Albert Johannsen will soon complete his great Beadle bibliography, and all collectors are urged to assist him with needed information. The publication of this bibliography will greatly advance our hobby and increase the value of all your dime novels.

Many new, fine collectors have come into the hobby in 1937, and more will follow in 1938, due to the energetic labors of an Eastern collector.

Charles Bragin has taken steps to safeguard his collection by installing a complete burglar alarm system in his home. Any attempt to pilfer a dime novel will result in enuf noise to wake the neighborhood!

Collectors should take precautions against theft and fire, which in the past has lost tens of thousands of dime novels.

The last of the dime novel publishers — Westbrook & Co. — has just passed out of the picture. What was once a great stock of reprints has entirely vanished, evidently sold years ago. Wise collectors will now hold on to their Westbrook publications, and what was said about their value, in past issues of the Roundup is now coming true.

The great publicity given to dime

novels by newspapers, etc., sometimes produces comic results. One collector was offered two copies of Tip Top, by a reader, for \$1,000 each. That would make millionaires out of Caldwell, Holmes, Guinon, etc., with their complete sets!

A book dealer writes us, "I am withdrawing my stuff—prices are skyrocketing." The dealer was asking \$2.50 per copy for ordinary color covers, evidently feels he can get more by waiting. Which is probably correct. This live book dealer sold almost 1,000 nickel novels in 1937.

Book dealers, in fact, are going into dime novels more frequently, finding they sell readily, and "pep" up their catalogues.

Dime novel collectors could learn much from these book dealers. One lesson is — the cheaper you offer your stuff, the less value it has in the eyes of the buyer. It is easier to sell dime novels at good prices than at cheap prices.

### NEWSY NEWS

"The Boys Own," was a boy's weekly published in Boston, Mass.

First appeared in August, 1874, and ended with No. 123, Saturday, January 29th, 1876. The continuation of the serials were published in No. 124 of Munro's Girls and Boys of America.

They were Gilderoy, or the Outlaw of the Glen-a Fox (English) serial, and "Seventeen Years and Four Months a Captive Among the Dyackes of Borneo."

Munro's Girls and Boys of America ended publication with Volume 8, No. 194, June 16, 1877. Serials were continued in Geo. Munro's New York "Fireside Companion," Nos. 503, 504 and 505.

"Ned Buntline's Own," Volume 1, No. 1, was issued July 22nd, 1848, at 309½ Broadway, New York. (Above sent in by Billy Benners.)

### "BITS"

By Harold C. Holmes

### COMRADES

No. 3 Tom Wright At the Throttle; or, The Belle of the Midnight Special. The typesetter and proofreader must have been from New York's "East Side" as they made the title on page

1 unlike that on the cover read: Tom Wright At the TROTTE.

### FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

No. 42. This was the last "strike" issue of Fame and Fortune, and was stapled while the other "strike" issues are not bound. This is the only novel I ever saw where the title on the picture cover was omitted apparently by force of some circumstance or other thus being unlike the Street & Smith publications where the titles were omitted for a time as a matter of an intended change in their covers. On this Fame and Fortune the cover bears the words COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE, then there is space for the title which in this case is vacant; then the words A STORY OF WALL STREET by a SELF MADE MAN.

### NICK CARTER WEEKLY

No. 47. On the picture cover the title is Nick Carter in a Chinese Joint; or, a Bargain in Crime. On page 1 the title is Nick Carter in Chinatown; or, The Doyers Street Criminals. The first title is used in all back issue lists of Nick Carter Weekly. The title on page 1 is that of the old Nick Carter Library of which this issue is a reprint.

### PLUCK AND LUCK

No. 3 original, No. 455 reprint, No. 1266 reprint are all titled: Little Lou, the Pride of the Continental Army. No. 370 original, No. 1171 reprint are titled: "Laughing Luke, the Yankee Spy of the Revolution. No. 381 original, No. 1182 reprint are titled: Running Bob; or Mad Anthony's Rolling Scout. In this last novel, Running Bob, the hero, comes from Philadelphia to Westchester County, New York and one chapter is given over to an incident in which he meets the heroes of the first two novels I have mentioned, Little Lou and Laughing Luke.

### THREE CHUMS

No. 42. Three Chums Good Start; or, Freshman vs. Sophomore. It may interest some of the fellows who do not live near enough to New York to be familiar with it to know that in the series where the Three Chums are at Columbia College that the author is using the names of buildings and

streets always used, actual names for actual places. Take one incident in this No. 42. Tom True and Ben Bright took their sweethearts, Dorothy and Mamie to the Herald Square Theatre to see the play, "The Children of the Ghetto." To get there they walked from Barnard College where the girls were, at 119th Street down the Boulevard to 116th Street, turned to the left and went East on that street to the Balustrade overlooking Morningside Park, went down the winding stairs to Columbus Avenue, east again on 116th Street to the elevated station where they had the long climb up the stairs to get their train downtown. All that is true to facts. Back in the "bicycle" era Broadway from 59th Street up to 125th was called the Boulevard, altho I do not think that was ever the official name for it. There really was a play by the name of the one they went to see and I have myself more than once been in the old Herald Square Theatre.

#### HAPPY DAYS

No. 809, April 6, 1910. Up to this number each week there had been published an installment of a "comic" story, reprints from Wide Awake Library and Comic Library. With this number they discontinued the comic and for the next 23 numbers they used in its place a page of general items titled, "Our Knowledge Corner."

#### YOUNG KLONDIKE

First number was published March 16, 1898. They were published every two weeks up through No. 24, February 1, 1899. From then on they were published every week through the last No. 39, which was dated May 17, 1899.

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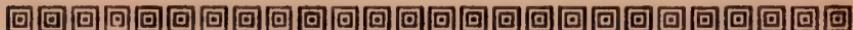
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**True Blue** #17 34. **Three Chums** #16 25 56 57 58 60.  
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**Western Weekly** #62 71. **Work & Win.** Over 4 pp. Numbers.  
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**Snaps Weekly** No. 36 Sassy Sam, 55 Truthful Jack, 67 The Traveling Dude.

**New York Weekly**—Volume XXXIII, No. 51, for 1878.

Also **Nightshade Library, Boys Own**, Published at Boston in the '70's.

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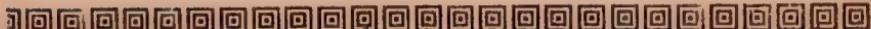
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**PEARSON'S, January, 1903.**

**SMART SET, April, 1912.**

**BALZAC LIBRARY, Daily, N. Y., 1900**

February, Nos. 4 5 6 7 8 9. March, Nos. 3 7 9 15 22 24. April, Nos. 28 29 30 32  
35 38 46. May, Nos. 51 53 55 56 66 67 68.

**BACON'S LIBRARY, TRI-WEEKLY, N. Y., 1900**

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329 330. ~

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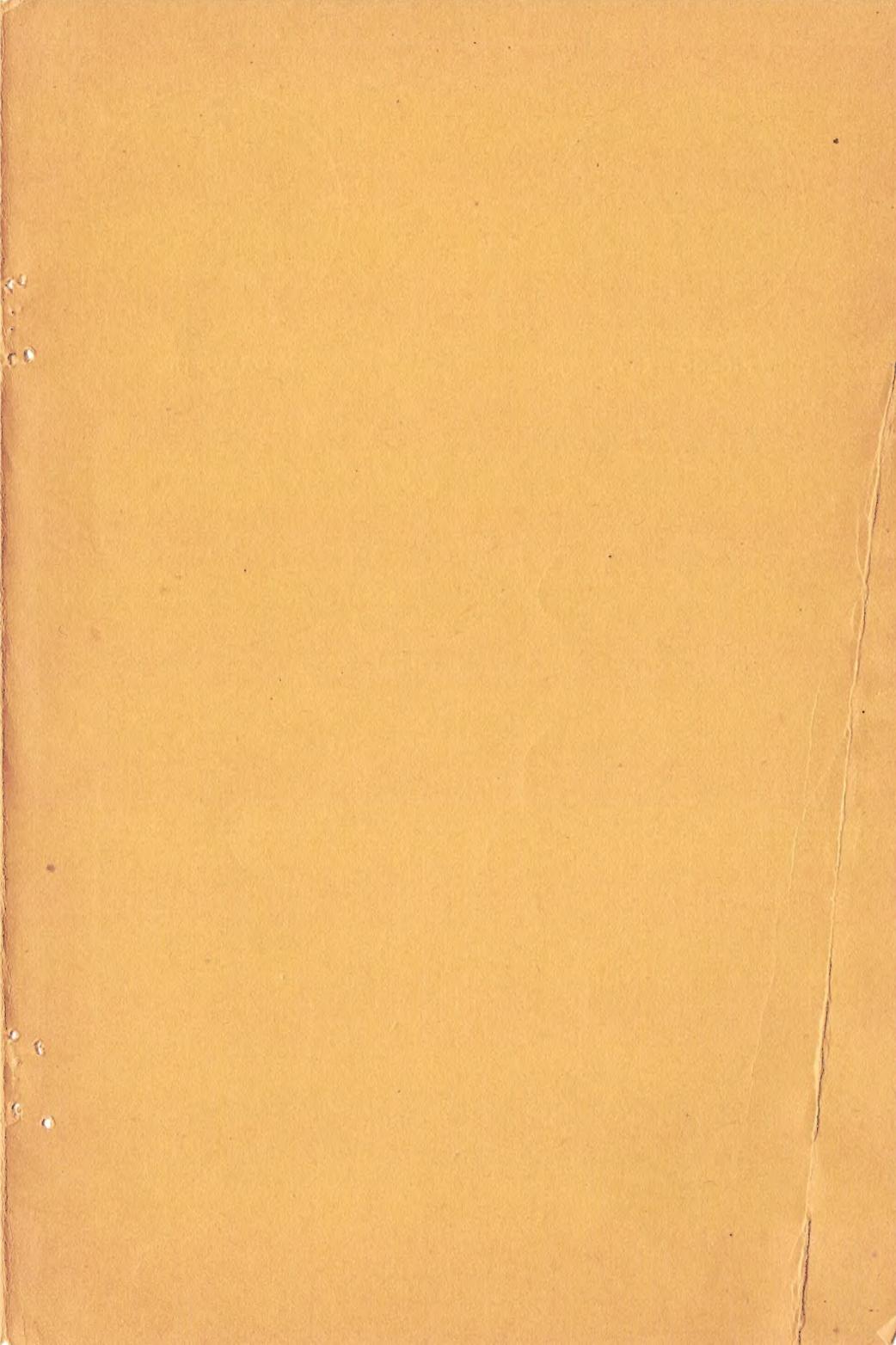
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